

04 June 1985
MBK-5007

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service

THROUGH: Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT: Monthly Report - Bangkok Bureau - May 1985

I. GENERAL

A. The first piling at the Bang Ping receiver site for the ROSET structures was driven on 22 May.

B. With the seasonal rains having brought to a close an unusually successful Vietnamese dry-season offensive in Cambodia and with the annual vote on Cambodian representation in the UN clearly in mind, new political maneuverings and possibilities have surfaced in the Cambodian situation. The ASEAN grouping has proposed the idea of "proximity" talks between the parties, which are still mulling the possibilities and implications. ASEAN, with Indonesia in the lead, has again been linking the normalization of U.S. and Vietnam ties with a Cambodia settlement and claimed China's backing for this proposal. There are also reports that Prince Sihanouk, following his perennial threat to resign as president of the tripartite opposition coalition and the renewed international chorus of support for his position, has agreed to the linking of the military arm of his faction with that of Son Sann's nationalist faction to offset the third, Khmer Rouge, segment of the resistance. (Also, see the accompanying example of the Prince's personal style of international diplomacy, in the form of annotations, in French and English, of an article on the Cambodian question that had appeared in the Bangkok Post.)

C. Political and natural tragedies in South Asia heightened the importance of the bureau's coverage of that region when on 11 May a new form of terrorism surfaced in India -- the placement of bombs in transistor radios in congested urban areas -- and when cyclones in the Bay of Bengal on 25 May caused tidal waves that killed thousands in low-lying areas of Bangladesh.

II. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

1. The bureau has suspended wirefiling of program summaries and reception FYI's of the clandestine Voice of the People of Burma radio as of 1 June. The radio has been silent since 17 April, and during a subsequent visit to China by Burmese leader Ne Win, Beijing quoted him as saying "the problems in the past had all been solved." More recently, Chinese leader Hu Yaobang publicly stated that China would not give material support to communist insurgencies in the region. His statement was carried in Radio Beijing's broadcasts beamed to the region.

2. With headquarters concurrence, the wirefiling of Hanoi in Thai program summaries was discontinued as of 20 May.

B. Communications

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Following almost constant circuit problems since the bureau's primary communications circuit was rehomed to Clark [] on 4 April, the circuit was temporarily switched [] early in the month where it remains to date and for the foreseeable future. While we were on the Clark route, delivery of routine messages had been so slow that a couple of tracer actions had been instituted and switch delay times of a day or more were reported.

III. ADMINISTRATION

A. Personnel

The Thai language class, conducted at the bureau on weekday afternoons by an Embassy teacher for American staffers since 2 October 1984, has been discontinued pending a possible decision to restart a class after this summer's American staff rotations.

B. Buildings and Grounds

In anticipation of ROSET space needs, the first aid room and a large part of the common hall area on the top floor of the bureau have been turned into a commodious office for the admin unit. A new first aid room has been created in the reconfigured space of the former spare office. The former administrative area on the operations floor will be turned into two new monitorial booths and a new reception area.

IV. VISITS

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1. OEA analyst [] visited the bureau 10 May.

2. Three IG officers visited on 14-15 May and discussed language incentive proposals with several U.S. staffers.

V. COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

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Deputy Chief [] as founding president of the Bangkok branch of the Chopin Society International, was (quite unexpectedly) invited to take an all-expense-paid trip to represent the branch on the presidium at the quinquennial International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw this coming October. [] whose musical tastes focus on the Broadway stage and whose eyes roll back in his head at the thought of 19 straight hours of Chopin, narrowly escaped an international incident by pointing out that the society has a new president, a classical pianist, who not only was anxious to take the trip but was Asian and therefore a better representative of the Bangkok society.

[]
Chief, Bangkok Bureau

Attachment:

Monthly Production Report

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Sihanouk seeks room for manoeuvring

KAMPUCHEAN DIARY. 22

SOME people never let you down. For any newsmen covering Indochina, no one is probably more precious than Prince Norodom Sihanouk. Not only is he one of the most outspoken and frank statesmen in the world, and more willing to deal with the Press than most, he also manages to make even when everything else is a bit dull.

His letter of April 16 to the Deputy Vice President of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea Khieu Samphan once again renews the fear (or for some, the hope) that the Prince is about to leave the group.

Indeed the letter expresses his desire to resign from his position as President of the CGDK but says that, should such a resignation not be granted (and no one better than the Prince knows that he will be asked to stay), then he would only request, according to a source who saw a copy of the letter, a leave of absence for health reasons, for "one or two years."

It is clear the main reasons for this attempted resignation have little to do with the Prince's health, although his doctors would like nothing more than to see their "impossible patient" (his own words, during a private conversation) take a good rest.

There are of course a few problems within the coalition, but nothing that cannot be worked out between the various parties involved. Don't forget this unusual government is made up of people who had had no burning desire to be associated too closely and finally did so for some very practical purposes. Tensions within similar movements are nothing unusual. Just take a look at the history of the French Resistance during World War II, or any group of people fighting a difficult war, with part of their leaders or supporters living far away from the scene. Exile does not make anything easier.

Norodom Sihanouk has always been a bit impatient with the warriors, those he calls the "bellious Cambodians," the Kampuchians dreaming of taking back Phnom Penh with tanks and troops. He does not like war, he sees little benefit in extending the suffering of his people.

After all he is a Buddhist and violence certainly has less and less room in his heart.

More than most Kampuchean leaders he is sceptical of the power of ready-made slogans and easily worked resolutions. The United Nations' General Assembly could dance on his head (as they say in French), but it would mean little if Hanoi and its powerful Soviet friends decide not to listen. A vote at the UN is not negligible. It is an embarrassment for Hanoi. It shows the world's camera. It prevents the oblivion of Kampuchea. But it is not going to change much of the situation on the field.

And, in what is going on in the field enough to convince the belligerent in one way or another to look for a different solution? Probably not at this point. An interesting comment was made recently to a visitor by the Vietnamese ambassador to the People's Republic of Kampuchea, Mr Ngu Dien. The ambassador, who is probably one of the best informed men on the scene, was unusually frank. He did not pretend the resistance had been wiped out along with the successful campaign against the border camps. Since the camps fell, he explained, there was an increase of incidents inside the country although the general level of military activity was less than last year.

The resistance may challenge the last part of the statement but would probably agree with the description of its activity in the interior. The National Army of Democratic Kampuchea (the Khmer Rouge) is operating around Phnom Penh now. The attack against the former royal capital of Udong, some 40 kilometres from Phnom Penh, really took place

on March 26 and was described by a Western journalist as the work of at least 100 soldiers, in uniform, well behaved and operating in full control of the situation. They did destroy several trucks (not tanks as claimed by a DK communiqué). An AFP correspondent reports that there is now a busy search for visitors of the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh.

The Khmer Rouge are not the only one to do something. The KPNLF pretend they have small teams of three or four men operating very close to the capital and are involved in sabotage. The National Sihanoukist Army, the surprise of the scene, is moving deeper in the interior from its small bases in Odor Meanchey province.

Ambassador Ngu Dien extended about the activity but went on to say that "soon the resistance (I guess he called them "rebels" or "bandits") would run out of ammunition and food, either the border was being sealed and the supply lines more and more hampered."

CHALLENGE

The resistance, of course, challenge this. There is no way the Vietnamese can seal the entire border, they say, it is too long (550 kilometres) and the terrain can be very difficult. "We still manage to go through," KPNLF and ANS members told us. "We have such quantity of ammunition in the interior we won't have problems for long," a senior Khmer Rouge told a Khmer nationalist. Food apparently is no special problem either. There is little that money cannot buy.

So, even with the border camps gone, it seems the war will go on, more and more, in fact, with no one in the position to win, or lose.

This is one of the concerns of Prince Sihanouk. The longer it goes on, the

more his people will suffer. Many observers may still believe he is motivated by a desire for power more than anything else (it is my feeling, shared by many of his close friends) that power bears little attraction for him anymore. At the core of his concern is the fate of his people and country.

With the prospect of a long stalemate and the conviction that some of the main parties involved in the conflict have no desire to compromise, he looks a very unhappy man. Being the president of the coalition government gives him a lot of international recognition. But sometimes he feels it is a bit of overkill. It does not leave him with enough room to manoeuvre, some of his supporters are well aware of his worry and probably live in constant fear of his next unexpected move.

The offer, made by Phnom Penh, to have him back in Kampuchea as long as he quits the coalition and dissociates himself from the Khmer Rouge does not particularly appeal to him. Within the strict framework of the PRK constitution (modelled after the Vietnamese constitution) it would be difficult to give him more than a marginal role, maybe similar to the one allocated to the late Prince Boudvanna Phouma in Laos.

But more and more Kampuchean watchers are convinced (and this is not just pure speculation) that several members of the present PRK government would be glad to see Prince Sihanouk come back to the country. As Khmer nationalists themselves they believe that, Sihanouk, better than anyone else, would be able to balance the increasing weight not only of Hanoi but also of the Soviet Union in Kampuchea.

For the time being, he probably won't resign. And he will try to convince friends and foes alike that the only way out is to be reasonable.

— Jacques Bekaert

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BANGKOK BUREAU PRODUCTION REPORT FOR MAY 1985

I. TOTALS FROM ALL SOURCES:

TOTAL PUBLISHABLE WORDAGE FILED DURING MONTH:	709,990
TOTAL NON-PUBLISHABLE WORDAGE FILED DURING MONTH:	280,830
TOTAL NUMBER OF PUBLISHABLE ITEMS FILED DURING MONTH:	1,727

	<u>BROAD- CASTS</u>	<u>PRESS AGENCIES</u>	<u>PUBLI- CATION</u>
II. <u>INPUT OF REGULAR COVERAGE:</u> (minutes or issues per week)	19,475 min.	20,450 min.	253.00 issues
III. <u>OUTPUT FROM ALL SOURCES:</u> (publishable words per month)			

AUSTRALIA

Melbourne Overseas Service in English	18,000		
Sydney THE AUSTRALIAN in English			1,590
Sydney THE BULLETIN in English			0
Sydney THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN in English			0

BANGLADESH

Dhaka Domestic Service in Bengali	850		
Dhaka Domestic Service in English	3,470		
Dhaka Overseas Service in Bengali	80		
Dhaka Overseas Service in English	270		
Dhaka BSS in English		2,440	
Dhaka SANGBAD in Bengali			0
Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English			70

BRUNEI

Kuala Belait THE BORNEO BULLETIN in English			0
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BURMA

Rangoon Domestic Service in Burmese	10,180		
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	<u>BROAD- CASTS</u>	<u>PRESS AGENCIES</u>	<u>PUBLI- CATION</u>
Rangoon BOTATAUNG in Burmese			3,380
Rangoon LOKTHA PYEITHU NEZIN in Burmese			0
Rangoon MYANMA ALIN in Burmese			0
Rangoon WORKING PEOPLE'S DAILY in English			3,360

CHINA

Beijing International Service in Bengali	0
Beijing International Service in Burmese	7,330
Beijing International Service in Indonesian	3,690
Beijing International Service in Lao	0
Beijing International Service in Thai	250
Beijing in Cambodian to Kampuchea	1,380
Beijing in Hindi to India	0
Beijing in Malay to Malaysia	280
Beijing in Urdu to India and Pakistan	0

CLANDESTINE

(Clandestine) Vietnam Resistance Radio in Vietnamese	0
(Clandestine) Voice of Democratic Kampuchea in Cambodian	25,000
(Clandestine) Voice of Malayan Democracy in Malay	12,820
(Clandestine) Voice of The National Army Democratic Kampuchea in Cambodian	12,680
(Clandestine) Voice of The People of Burma in Burmese	0
(Clandestine) Voice of The People of Malaysia in Malay	2,200

HONG KONG

Hong Kong AFP in English	0
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INDIA

Delhi Domestic Service in English	73,360
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	<u>BROAD- CASTS</u>	<u>PRESS AGENCIES</u>	<u>PUBLI- CATION</u>
Delhi Domestic Service in Hindi	1,100		
Delhi Domestic Service in Tamil	80		
Delhi General Overseas Service in English	5,690		
Delhi ISI Diplomatic Information Service in English		390	
Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English			2,180
Calcutta ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA in Bengali			980
Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English			350
Delhi INDIA TODAY in English			0
Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English			5,710
Delhi NATIONAL HERALD in English			1,000
Delhi PATRIOT in English			730
Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English			0
Madras THE HINDU in English			0

INDONESIA

Jakarta Domestic Service in Indonesian	7,180		
Jakarta International Service in English	1,290		
Jakarta BERITA BUANA in Indonesian			2,350
Jakarta JAKARTA POST in English			710
Jakarta KOMPAS in Indonesian			9,040
Jakarta MERDEKA in Indonesian			10,080
Jakarta SINAR HARAPAN in Indonesian			5,550
Jakarta TEMPO in Indonesian			5,590
Jakarta THE INDONESIA TIMES in English			0

KAMPUCHEA

Phnom Penh Domestic Service in Cambodian	47,550		
Phnom Penh SPK in English		12,340	

	<u>BROAD- CASTS</u>	<u>PRESS AGENCIES</u>	<u>PUBLI- CATION</u>
Phnom Penh SPK in French		6,770	
Phnom Penh SPK in French to KPL Vientiane		0	
Phnom Penh VNA in Vietnamese to VNA Hanoi		0	
<u>LAOS</u>			
Vientiane Domestic Service in Lao	44,110		
Vientiane KPL in English		20,230	
Vientiane KPL in English/French to SPK Phnom Penh		0	
Vientiane SPK in French to SPK Phnom Penh		0	
Vientiane VNA in Vietnamese to VNA Hanoi		0	
Vientiane PASASON in Lao			0
<u>MALAYSIA</u>			
Kuala Lumpur Domestic Service in English	5,300		
Kuala Lumpur Domestic Service in Malay	2,160		
Kuala Lumpur International Service in English	9,940		
Kuala Lumpur BERITA HARIAN in Malay			500
Kuala Lumpur BERITA MINGGU in Malay			0
Kuala Lumpur MINGGUAN MALAYSIA in Malay			0
Kuala Lumpur NEW STRAITS TIMES in English			2,770
Kuala Lumpur NEW SUNDAY TIMES in English			0
Kuala Lumpur UTUSAN MALAYSIA in Malay			0
<u>NEPAL</u>			
Katmandu External Service in English	3,180		
Katmandu THE RISING NEPAL in English			260
<u>PAKISTAN</u>			
Karachi Domestic Service in English	14,270		

	<u>BROAD- CASTS</u>	<u>PRESS AGENCIES</u>	<u>PUBLI- CATION</u>
Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu	14,420		
Karachi Overseas Service in Urdu	590		
<u>SINGAPORE</u>			
Singapore Domestic Service in English	1,440		
Singapore THE STRAITS TIMES in English			1,290
Singapore THE SUNDAY TIMES in English			380
<u>SRI LANKA</u>			
Colombo Domestic Service in English	220		
Colombo Domestic Service in Tamil	90		
Colombo International Service in English	5,710		
Colombo International Service in Hindi	2,710		
Colombo DAILY NEWS in English			0
Colombo SUN in English			1,370
Colombo WEEKEND in English			0
<u>THAILAND</u>			
Bangkok Domestic Service in English	5,790		
Bangkok Domestic Service in Thai	14,160		
Bangkok Voice of Free Asia in Cambodian	2,280		
Bangkok Voice of Free Asia in English	2,700		
Bangkok Voice of Free Asia in Lao	0		
Bangkok Voice of Free Asia in Thai	2,900		
Bangkok Voice of Free Asia in Vietnamese	2,080		
Bangkok BANGKOK POST in English			37,110
Bangkok BANGKOK WORLD in English			14,500
Bangkok DAO SIAM in Thai			530
Bangkok LAK THAI in Thai			3,290

	<u>BROAD- CASTS</u>	<u>PRESS AGENCIES</u>	<u>PUBLI- CATION</u>
Bangkok MATICHON SUT SAPDA in Thai			910
Bangkok MATICHON in Thai			2,970
Bangkok MATUPHUM in Thai			0
Bangkok NAEO NA in Thai			1,230
Bangkok PATINYA in Thai			0
Bangkok SIAM RAT SAPDA WICHAN in Thai			1,330
Bangkok SIAM RAT in Thai			2,190
Bangkok SU ANAKHOT in Thai			930
Bangkok THAI RAT in Thai			1,300
Bangkok THE NATION REVIEW in English			25,390
Bangkok WIWAT in Thai			1,280

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

Moscow International Service in Tamil	0
Moscow Radio Peace and Progress in Indonesian	0
Moscow in Bengali to Bangladesh	1,580
Moscow in Burmese to Burma	1,680
Moscow in Cambodian to Kampuchea	2,310
Moscow in Hindi to India	1,950
Moscow in Indonesian to Indonesia	540
Moscow in Lao to Laos	600
Moscow in Thai to Thailand	1,390
Moscow in Urdu to India	0
Moscow in Urdu to Pakistan	2,110

UNITED KINGDOM

London BBC World Service in English	5,840
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<u>BROAD- CASTS</u>	<u>PRESS AGENCIES</u>	<u>PUBLI- CATION</u>
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VIETNAM

Hanoi Domestic Service in Vietnamese	92,720	
Hanoi International Service in Cambodian	0	
Hanoi International Service in English	6,540	
Hanoi International Service in Thai	3,350	
Hanoi NHAN DAN in Vietnamese to NHAN DAN Ho Chi Minh City		0
Hanoi VNA in English		4,370
Hanoi NHAN DAN in Vietnamese		11,080
Hanoi QUAN DOI NHAN DAN in Vietnamese		5,640
Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese		5,140